WILD CARDS II™

EPIC COMICS®

On September 15th, 1946, the world changed forever. On that day a bomb containing an alien virus -- nicknamed the wild card -- exploded over Manhattan. Out of every hundred people the virus touched, ninety died. Of the remaining ten, nine became monstrous jokers. But one out of a hundred became an ace, someone more than human, someone with a gift, a talent... a power.

DR. TACHYON: His race unleashed the wild card virus. He has hired Ackroyd to find the bomber before anti-wild-card hysteria starts again, like it did in the fifties.

GOLDEN BOY: Most powerful of the original aces, now the most despised. His testimony in the 1950's led to the death of Tachyon's lover, Blythe.

"SMOOTH EDDY" SHILOH: The last surviving accomplice of Dr. Tod, now in a wheel chair. He's the keeper of a peculiar shrine at Jetboy's old airfield in New Jersey.

THE GREAT AND POWERFUL TURTLE: From inside his shell, he can lift battleships with the power of his mind. But no one has seen the man inside.

PEREGRINE: The winged wonder. Star of her own late-night talk show, celebrity and crusader.

JAY ACKROYD: He can teleport anything or anyone by pointing and dropping his thumb. He's been hired to find out who bombed Jetboy's Tomb.

YEOMAN: The Zen archer. A hero unaffected by the wild card. He used to fight crime with his bow and razor-tipped arrows. Now retired.

SENATOR GREGG HARTMANN: Publicly the joker's best friend. Secretly the host of Puppetman, who lives to control and destroy.

FORTUNATO: Tantric magician, procurer of expensive call girls. Once the most powerful of the aces, now believed safely cloistered in a Japanese monastery.

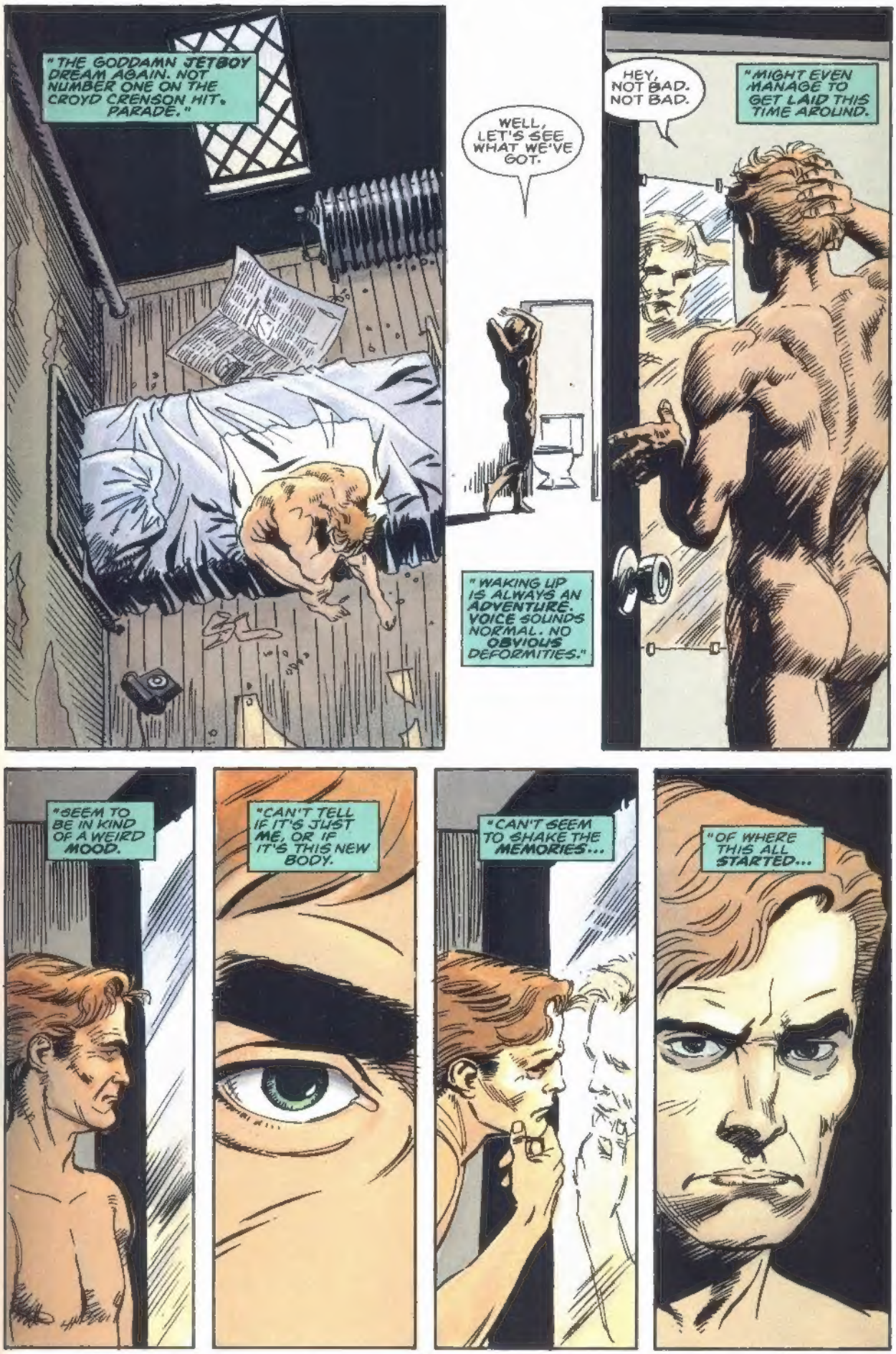
CHRYSALIS: The joker with the see-through skin, privy to all the information that moves through Jokertown.

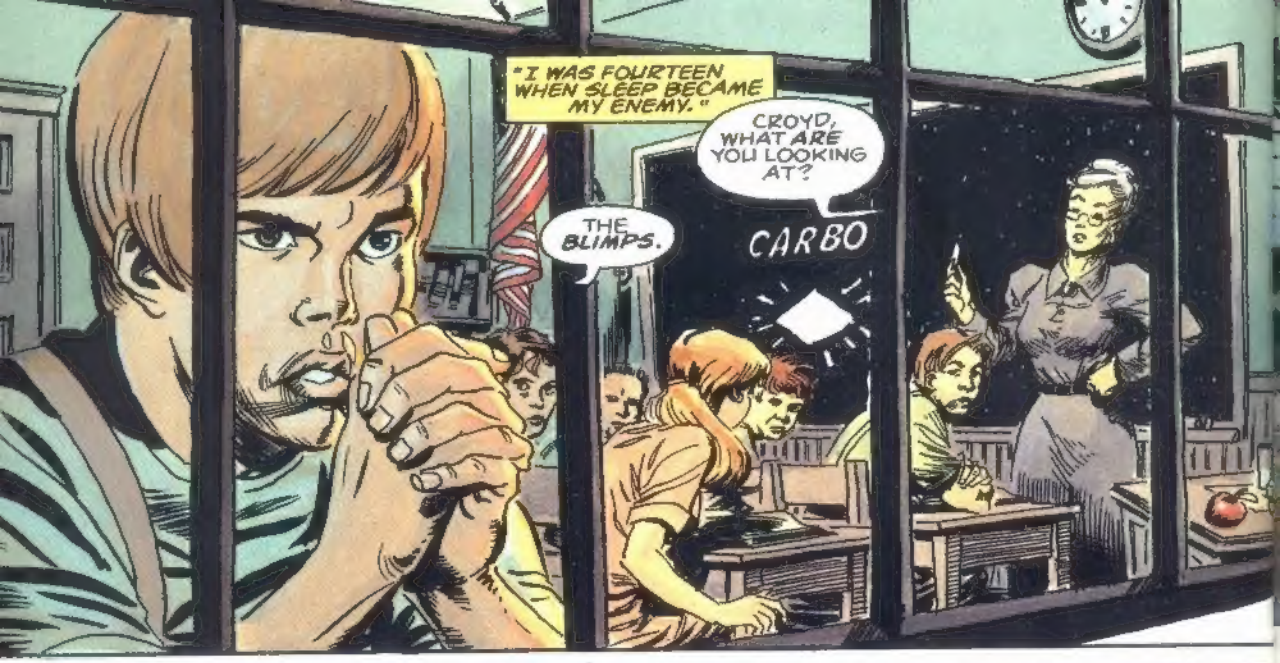
JETBOY: He died in 1946, trying to stop the alien gene bomb, which had fallen into the hands of his arch-enemy, Dr. Tod.

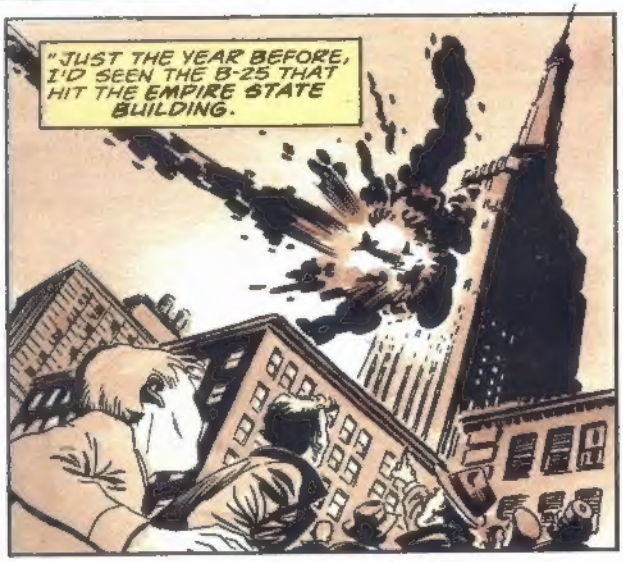
The action of this series takes place in early 1988, in between the events of Bantam's Book V: Down and Dirty, and Book VI: Ace in the Hole.

diamond in the rough

"...AND ONCE MORE THE SLEEPER WAKES."


"THE GODDAMN JETBOY DREAM AGAIN. NOT NUMBER ONE ON THE CROYD CRENSON HIT PARADE."
WELL, LET'S SEE WHAT WE'VE GOT.
"WAKING UP IS ALWAYS AN ADVENTURE. VOICE SOUNDS NORMAL. NO OBVIOUS DEFORMITIES."
HEY, NOT BAD. NOT BAD.
"MIGHT EVEN MANAGE TO GET LAID THIS TIME AROUND.
"SEEM TO BE IN KIND OF A WEIRD MOOD.
"CAN'T TELL IF IT'S JUST ME, OR IF IT'S THIS NEW BODY.
"CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE THE MEMORIES...
"OF WHERE THIS ALL STARTED...


"I WAS FOURTEEN WHEN SLEEP BECAME MY ENEMY."
CROYD, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
THE BLIMPS.
CARBO


"JUST THE YEAR BEFORE, I'D SEEN THE B-25 THAT HIT THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.

"FIORELLO LAGUARDIA WAS THERE IN PERSON. THERE'S JUST SOMETHING ABOUT DISASTER AND NEW YORK.
513

ALL RIGHT, CLASS, IT'S ONLY...
MRRRAAAAAW
AIR RAID! THAT'S JETBOY UP THERE!

WHAT WOULD HE BE DOING UP THERE? THE WAR'S OVER.
MAYBE THIS IS JUST A DRILL...
THIS IS NO DRILL. THERE'S SOMEBODY BAD UP THERE. I'M GOING HOME.

"MY HOUSE WAS ONLY SIX BLOCKS AWAY...

"... BUT IT WAS GOING TO BE A LONG WALK HOME."

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

JETBOY! BOMB! EVERYTHING BLEW UP! EVERYBODY'S DEAD!

COME ON! WE CAN GET THROUGH IF WE GO OVER SOME CARS.

HOLY MARY! WHAT'S HE GOT?

HELP ME! MAKE IT STOOOo

YOU SMELL SMOKE?

JOE. I'M SCARED SHITLESS.

THEY'RE GOING THE WRONG WAY!

JOE?

"THE CROWD THINNED OUT, BUT THE SCREAMING NEVER STOPPED."
YOU WANT TO COME HOME WITH ME?
I CAN MAKE IT.
YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME: IT'S INSIDE ME! IT'S--
HEY, KID! HOLD IT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE, SON? WE'RE UNDER MARTIAL LAW. SOME KIND OF GERM BOMB WENT OFF.
DID JETBOY...
JETBOY'S DEAD, SON. NOW GET HOME.

"LESS THAN A BLOCK TO GO. SO TIRED, I DIDN'T KNOW IF I'D MAKE IT.

"THE TREE WAS LIKE SOMETHING FROM THE WIZARD OF OZ. I COULDN'T SEE THE POPPIES THAT WERE MAKING ME SO SLEEPY."
GET AWAY!

I'M SORRY YOUR DADDY'S DEAD.

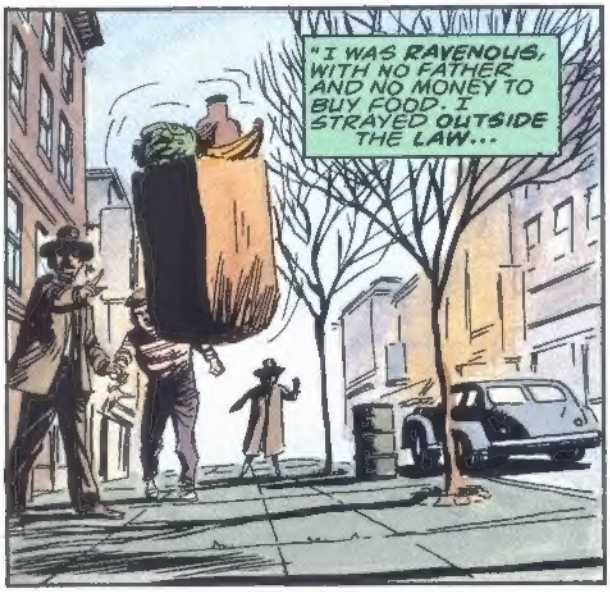
CROYD?
"I COULD HEAR HER, BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO MEAN ANYTHING."
BRING

CROYD? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

"I'M SO TIRED."

"I SLEPT FOUR WEEKS THAT FIRST TIME...

"... AND WOKE UP AS SOMETHING MORE THAN I HAD BEEN."

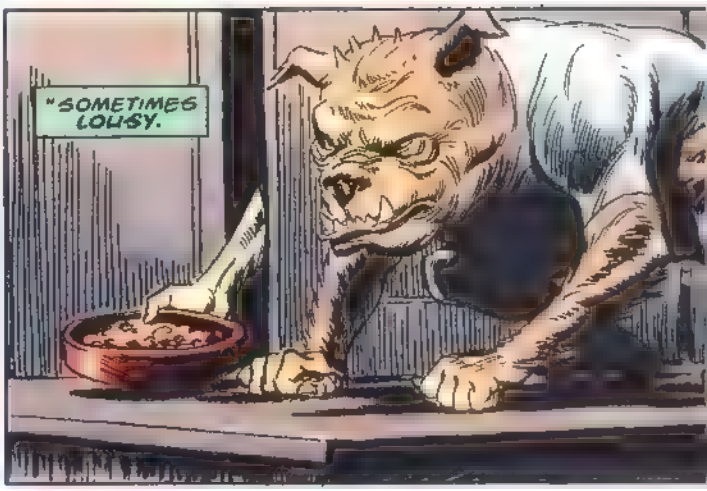

"I WAS RAVENOUS, WITH NO FATHER AND NO MONEY TO BUY FOOD. I STRAYED OUTSIDE THE LAW...

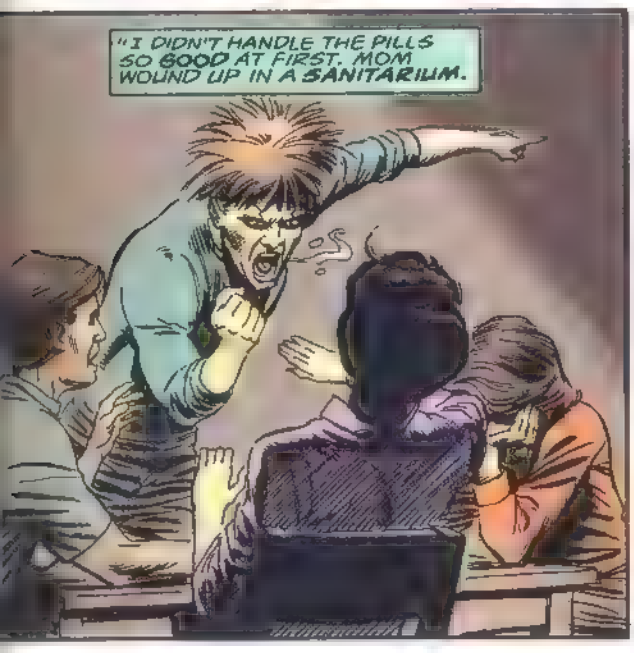
"... MADE NEW FRIENDS...

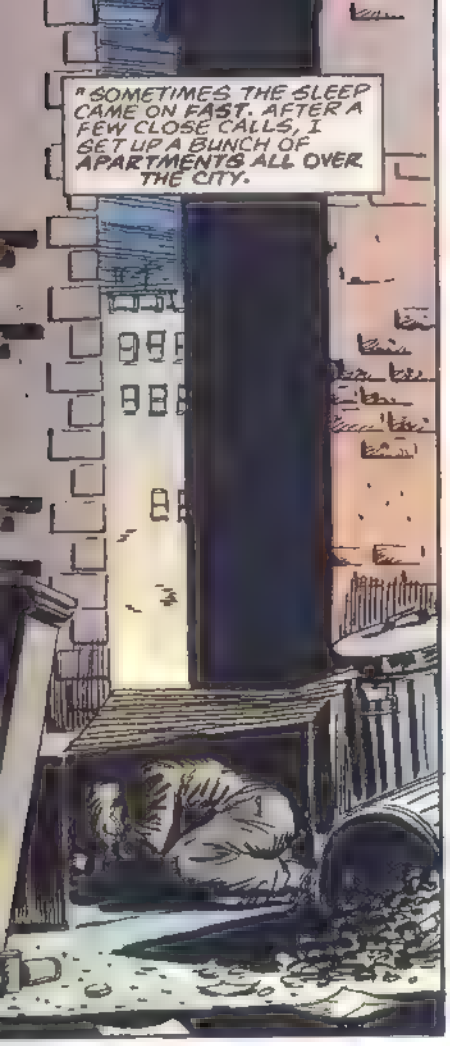
"... AND SOME NEW ENEMIES. BUT THE NEW CROYD COULD TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.

"THE NEXT SLEEP PUT ME IN AN EIGHT-WEEK COMA.

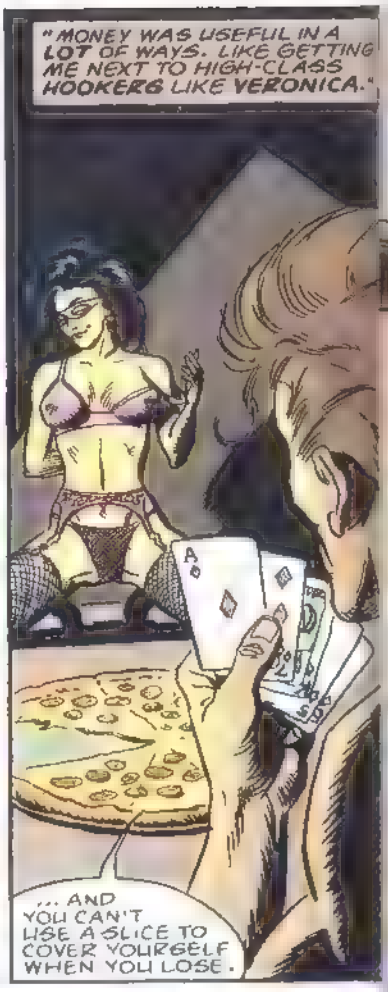
"EVERY TIME I WOKE UP IT WAS SOMETHING NEW. SOMETIMES WONDERFUL.

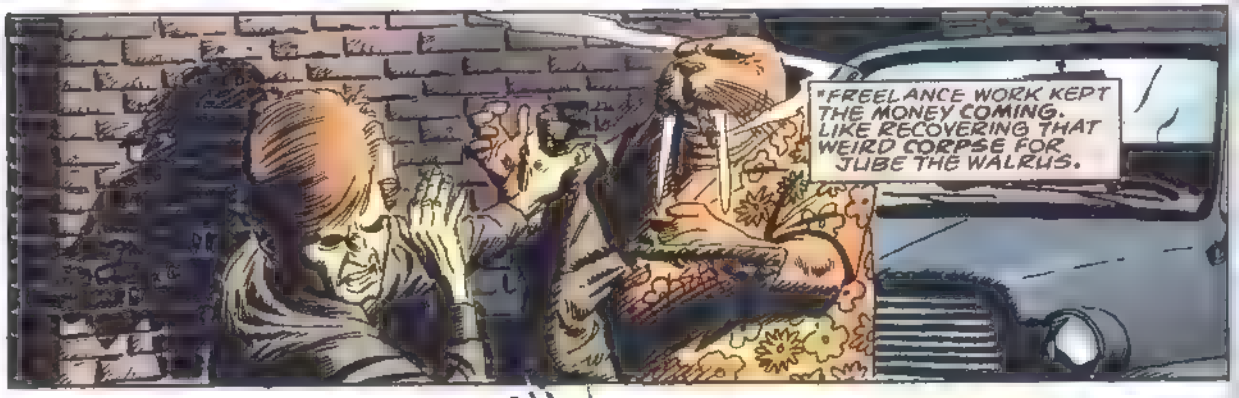





"SOMETIMES THE SLEEP CAME ON FAST. AFTER A FEW CLOSE CALLS, I GET UP A BUNCH OF APARTMENTS ALL OVER THE CITY.

"SINCE MY BODY KEPT CHANGING, THE SHYSTERS COULDN'T MAKE CHARGES AGAINST ME STICK. EVENTUALLY I FOUND MORE REASONABLE MEMBERS OF THE LAW-ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY TO DEAL WITH.


"MONEY WAS USEFUL IN A LOT OF WAYS. LIKE GETTING ME NEXT TO HIGH-CLASS HOOKERS LIKE VERONICA."
... AND YOU CAN'T USE A SLICE TO COVER YOURSELF WHEN YOU LOSE.

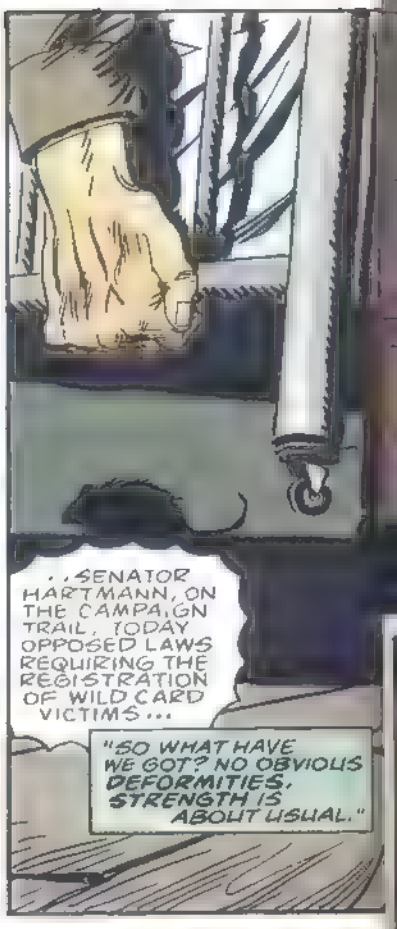

"FREELANCE WORK KEPT THE MONEY COMING. LIKE RECOVERING THAT WEIRD CORPSE FOR JUBE THE WALRUS.

"I EVEN WORKED FOR THE MAFIA WHEN THE MONEY WAS RIGHT. I FOUND A KILLER ACE NAMED DEMISE THEY WANTED TO TALK TO.

"AFTER THE DEMISE GIG, I CRASHED AT TACHYON'S. WOKE UP LOOKING LIKE A HORROR MOVIE EXTRA.
"WOUND UP IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAFIA WAR. WHICH IS WHEN THINGS STARTED TO GET WEIRD.
"SURE, I'M A LITTLE PARANOID, BUT THIS TIME, SOMEBODY WAS REALLY AFTER ME."
DAILY PRESS HERALD
NEW WILD CARD OUTBREAK
HUNT FOR CONTAGIOUS ACE P 4
"THE ROBOT BROUGHT ME TO TACHYON, WHO SAID I WAS SPREADING A MUTATED VIRUS. THE WILD CARD HAD BECOME CONTAGIOUS.
"TOO BAD I DON'T LISTEN SO GOOD WHEN I'VE BEEN SPEEDING. THE LAST THING I REMEMBER WAS COMING HERE FOR FORTY THOUSAND WINKS."

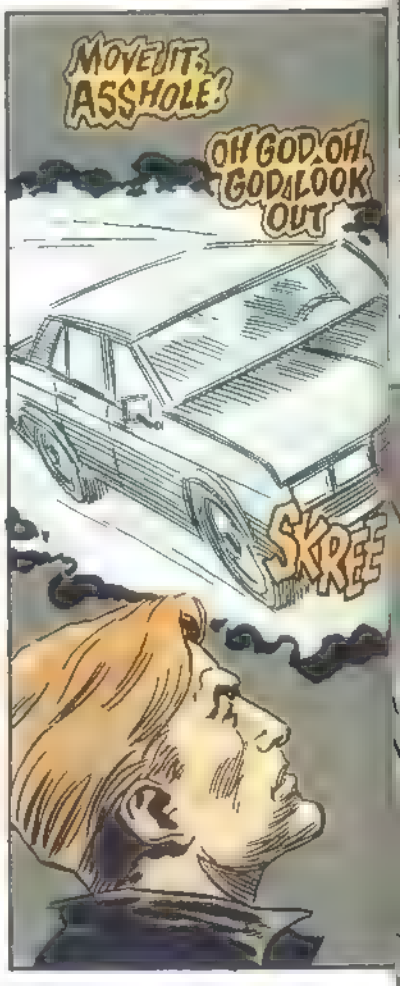
...RAINS ENDING EARLY THIS EVENING. LOW IN THE UPPER FORTIES TONIGHT...
"OF COURSE, I COULD BE NORMAL THIS TIME. I MIGHT NOT HAVE ANY POWERS AT ALL. I MIGHT FALL ASLEEP TONIGHT LIKE ANYBODY ELSE AND WAKE UP IN THE MORNING AND STILL BE THE SAME."

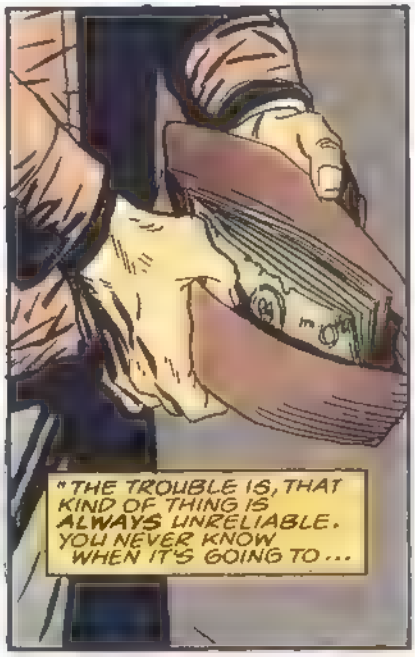
... STILL NO WORD ON THE EXPLOSION THAT DESTROYED JETBOY'S TOMB EARLIER TODAY...
"KNOCK IT OFF, CRENSON. THE GIRLS IN THE AUDIENCE ARE STARTING TO GET TEARY-EYED."


...SENATOR HARTMANN, ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL, TODAY OPPOSED LAWS REQUIRING THE REGISTRATION OF WILD CARD VICTIMS...
"SO WHAT HAVE WE GOT? NO OBVIOUS DEFORMITIES. STRENGTH IS ABOUT USUAL."

...THE DODGERS, BACK HOME IN BROOKLYN, TAKE ON THE ATLANTA PEACHES TONIGHT IN THE FIRST OF THREE GAMES. PITCHING COACH FIDEL CASTRO PREDICTED...

"NOTHING'S CATCHING FIRE, OR TURNING TO ICE, OR DISAPPEARING... OR DISINTEGRATING..."
TO HELL WITH IT. LET'S EAT
CLIK

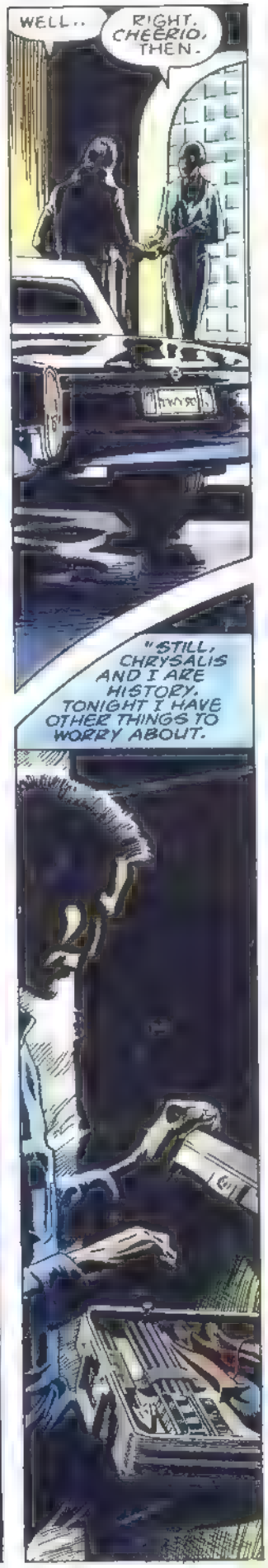

MOVE IT, ASSHOLE!
OH GOD, OH GOD, LOOK OUT
SKREE

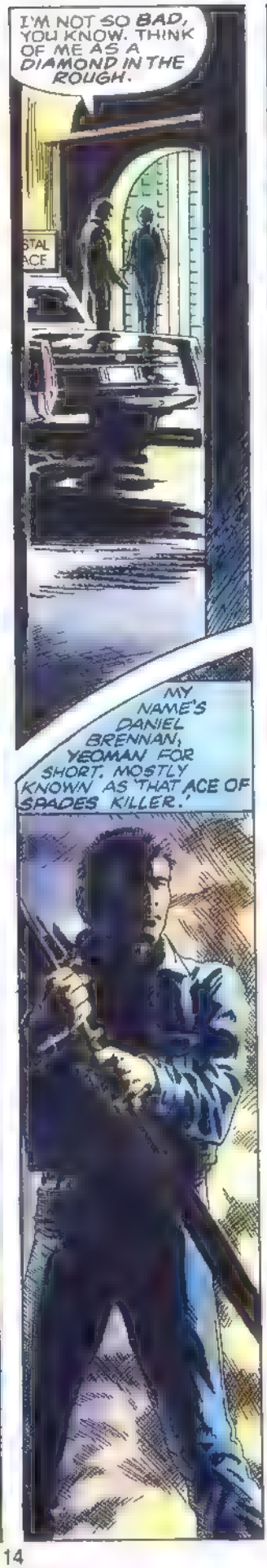


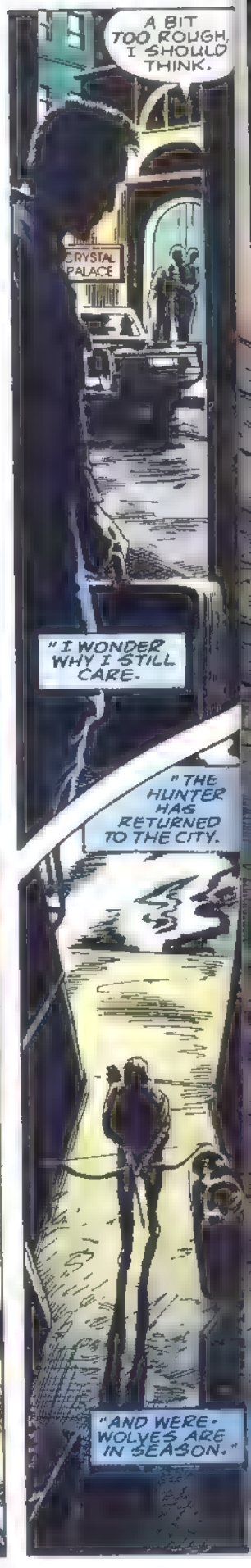
HAAGHH FIRE IT'S HELP ME HELP EEEEEEEEE OH GOD BLOWING UP

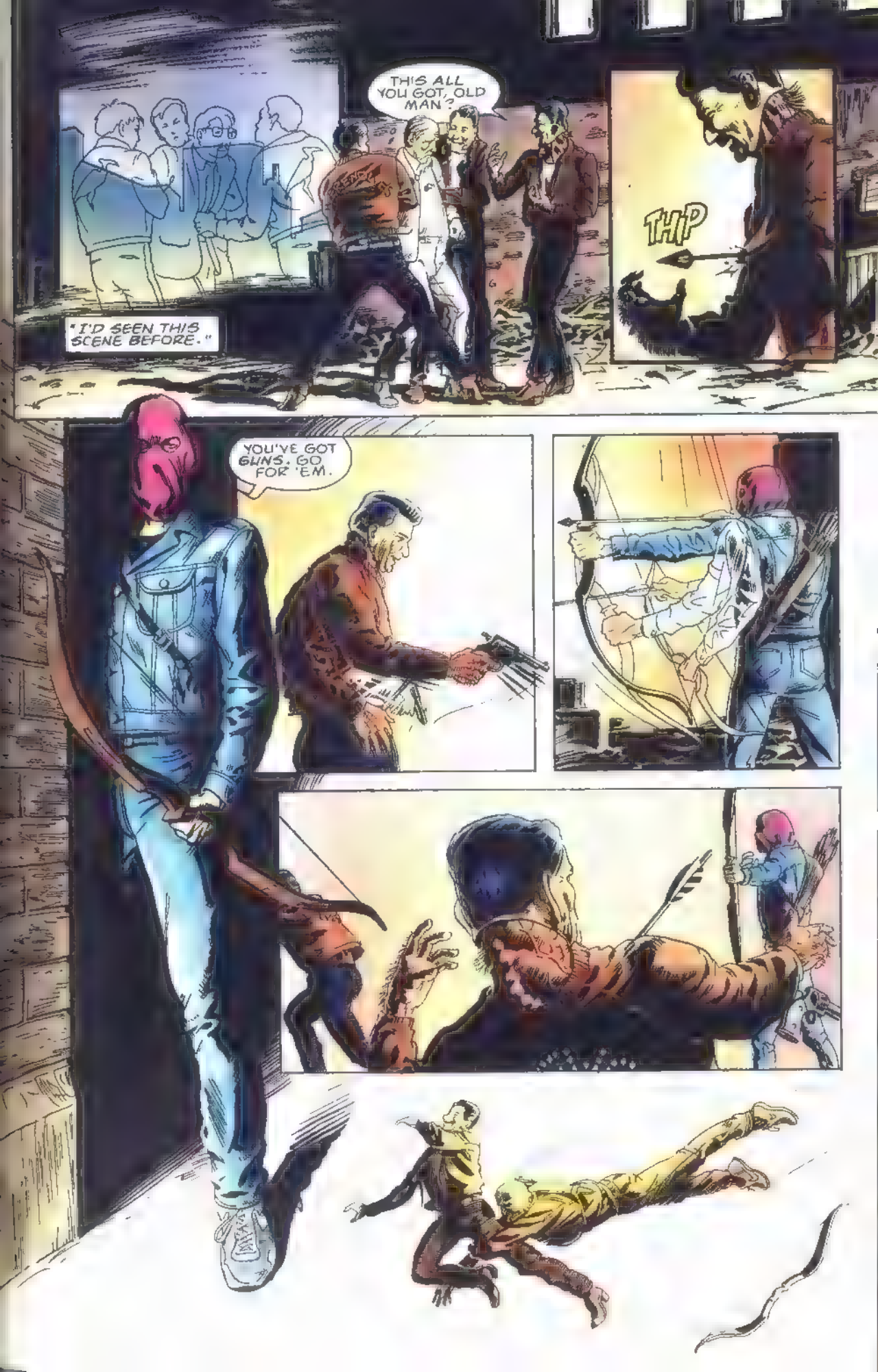
"...HIT YOU."

"SHE KEPT TOO MUCH OF HERSELF TO HERSELF. NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED TO BREAK THROUGH HER FACADE.
"BUT ACKROYD, I SEE, IS DOING WORSE THAN ME.

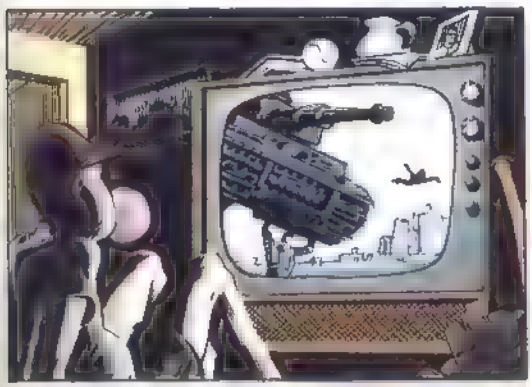

WELL..
RIGHT. CHEERIO, THEN.
"STILL, CHRYSALIS AND I ARE HISTORY. TONIGHT I HAVE OTHER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT.


I'M NOT SO BAD, YOU KNOW. THINK OF ME AS A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH.
MY NAME'S DANIEL BRENNAN, YEOMAN FOR SHORT. MOSTLY KNOWN AS 'THAT ACE OF SPADES KILLER.'


A BIT TOO ROUGH, I SHOULD THINK.
"I WONDER WHY I STILL CARE.
"THE HUNTER HAS RETURNED TO THE CITY.
"AND WERE-WOLVES ARE IN SEASON."

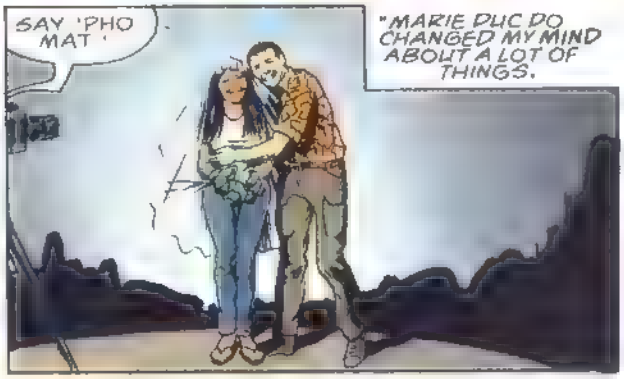

"I'D SEEN THIS SCENE BEFORE."
THIS ALL YOU GOT, OLD MAN?
THIP
YOU'VE GOT GUNS. GO FOR 'EM.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GONE, MAN, GONE.
I'M BACK.
WHAT DO YOU WANT MAN?
THERE WAS A BOMB THIS MORNING. WIPED OUT JETBOY'S TOMB. WHAT DO THE SHADOW FISTS KNOW ABOUT IT?
NOTHING, MAN, NOTHING
"WHAT I REALLY WANT IS TO BE BACK IN THE CATSKILLS WATCHING THE DODGERS ON TV WITH JENNIFER."
"BUT TACHYON WAS DESPERATE, SO HERE I AM.'
WRONG.
I SWEAR.. UNH!
MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW. GIVE ME SOMEBODY WHO DOES. WHERE'S FADEOUT?
UNH! ORIENTAL GROCERY IT'S ON ELIZABETH
I KNOW IT
LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU... YOU KILLER! VIGILANTE SCUM!
"I'M DOING THIS FOR THE MEMORY OF JET-BOY. HE KILLED TEN TIMES THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE I EVER DID. ONLY JETBOY IS A HERO AND I'M SCUM.
"I LOVE NEW YORK.'


"MY GENERATION WAS DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHERS. OUR HEROES WERE REAL.

"I WANTED TO BE A HERO TOO. THAT'S WHY I JOINED 'TODAY'S ARMY.'

MY MISTAKE."


SAY 'PHO MAT'
"MARIE DUC DO CHANGED MY MIND ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS.

"THEN I MET GENERAL KIEN PHUC, ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. YOU COULD SAY WE DIDN'T GET ALONG, RIGHT FROM THE START.
"YOU COULD SAY THAT. IF YOU LIKE UNDERSTATEMENT.
"NO MEAN FEAT."
"I FIGURED KIEN WAS INTO EVERYTHING DIRTY VIETNAM HAD TO OFFER.

"I TOOK SOME OF MY MEN ON A FIELD TRIP TO KIEN'S HQ. SERGEANT GULGOWSKI HAD ENOUGH EVIDENCE IN HIS BRIEF CASE TO PUT KIEN IN FRONT OF A FIRING SQUAD.

"THEY WERE WAITING FOR US AT THE L-Z.

BRAPAPOW

"MY EYES WERE OPEN, BUT I WASN'T GOING ANYWHERE. I COULDN'T EVEN LIFT MY HEAD.

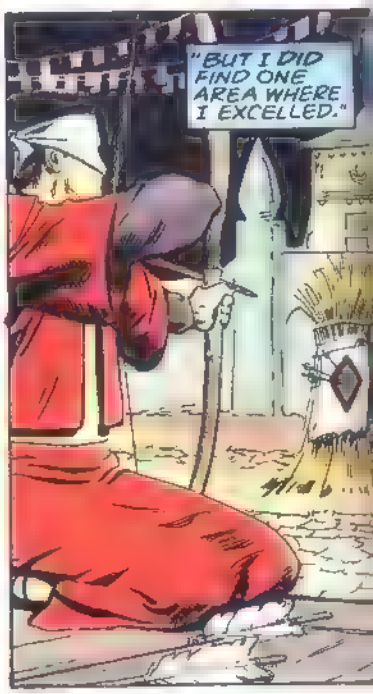
"IT WAS KIEN HIMSELF. WE'D BEEN SET UP.

"IT TOOK ME FOUR DAYS TO WALK OUT OF THE JUNGLE. I WENT STRAIGHT TO MY COMMANDER'S OFFICE AND LAID IT OUT FOR HIM.

"KIEN SUGGESTED MY WOUNDS MIGHT HAVE MADE ME 'DELIRIOUS:

"MARIE HAD GIVEN ME UP FOR DEAD.
"ME TOO.
UNGH...
"I NEVER DREAMED KIEN WOULD GO THAT FAR.
"I SWORE I'D NEVER AGAIN UNDERESTIMATE KIEN'S CAPACITY FOR EVIL."

"THE FALL OF SAIGON FINISHED MY LESSON ON HUMAN NATURE.

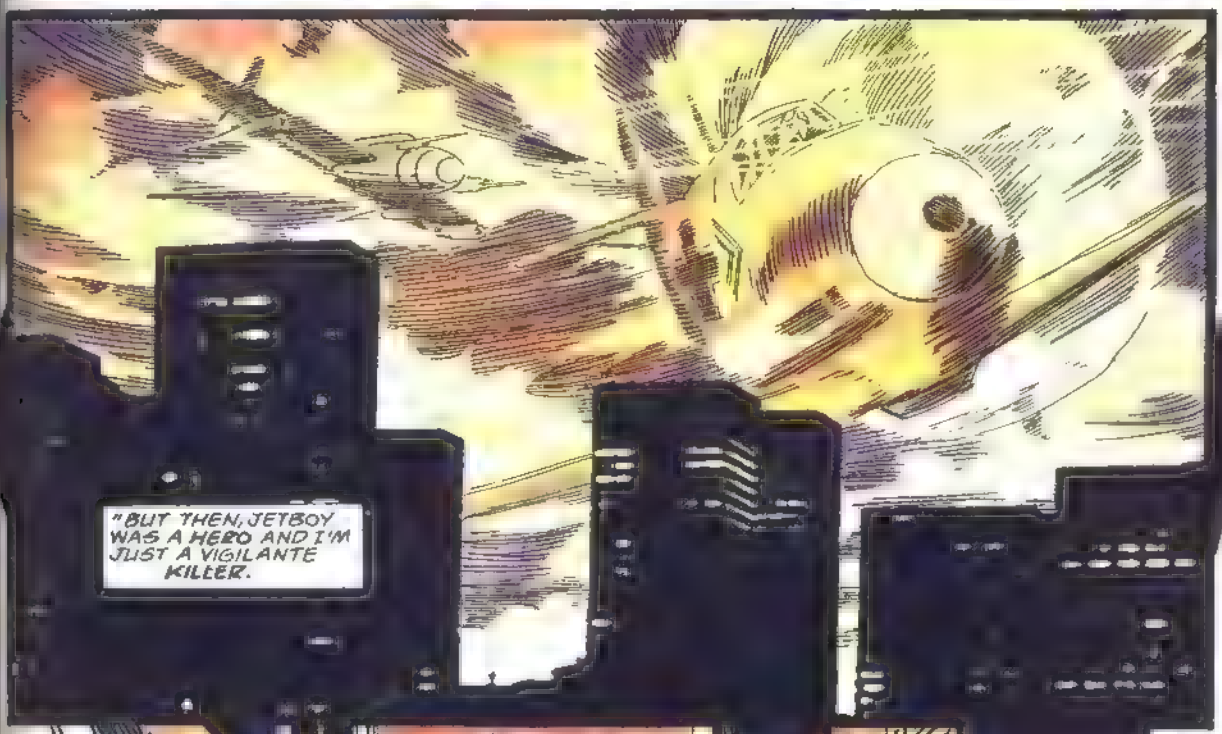


"CONTEMPLATION WAS NOT MY KARMA, BUT I WAS TECHNICALLY A DESERTER AND COULDN'T JUST STROLL AROUND THE STREETS OF MANHATTAN.
MINH
RESTAU
"A FRIEND FROM THE OLD DAYS NAMED MINH HID ME OUT.
KIEN... HE'S HERE...
"HIS DRY CLEANERS AND CHINESE RESTAURANTS RAKE IN THE MONEY. MAYBE HE PUTS HEROIN IN THE BEAN CURD.
KIEN'S
Chinese Cuisine
"MEANWHILE, HIS WEREWOLVES AND IMMACULATE EGRETS ARE JUST THE TIP OF AN ICEBERG CALLED THE SHADOW FIST SOCIETY. THERE ARE MAYBE FIVE OF US IN THE WORLD THAT KNOW KIEN IS IN CHARGE.
MYK

"THE CITY TOOK HOLD OF ME. FIRST THERE WAS CHRYSALIS, WHO REFUSED MY OFFERS OF LOVE AND PROTECTION.
"THEN THERE WAS JENNIFER MALOY THE ACE KNOWN AS WRAITH, WHO WALKS THROUGH WALLS. SHE GOT INSIDE ME ALMOST THAT EASILY.
"LAST YEAR, THE SHADOW FISTS TOOK ON THE MAFIA, AND WON. THEY OWN THE CITY NOW.
"ACES GOT INVOLVED ON BOTH SIDES, AND BLOOD FLOWED BY THE GALLON.
"NOW NEW YORK IS FULL OF CHEAP HEROIN AND EVEN CHEAPER THUGS.
VIGILANTE KILLER STRIKES AGAIN
"MAYBE THEY DIDN'T ALL DESERVE TO DIE. BUT WHEN YOU LIE DOWN WITH DIRT LIKE KIEN, YOU'RE LIABLE TO GET UP DEAD.
MAYOR VOWS TO GET OUT
"IT WAS JENNIFER THAT CONVINCED ME TO GET OUT, BACK TO THE CATSKILLS, WHERE LIFE MEANS SOMETHING.

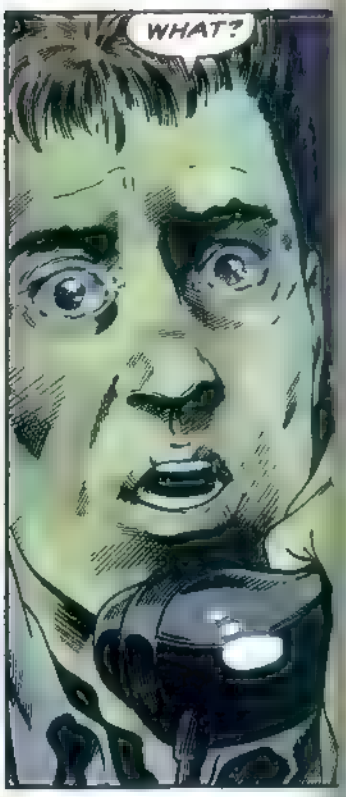
CRYSTAL PALACE
"YOU CAN'T SEE THE STARS IN THE CITY. THE BIG LIGHTS BLOW THE LITTLE ONES AWAY.

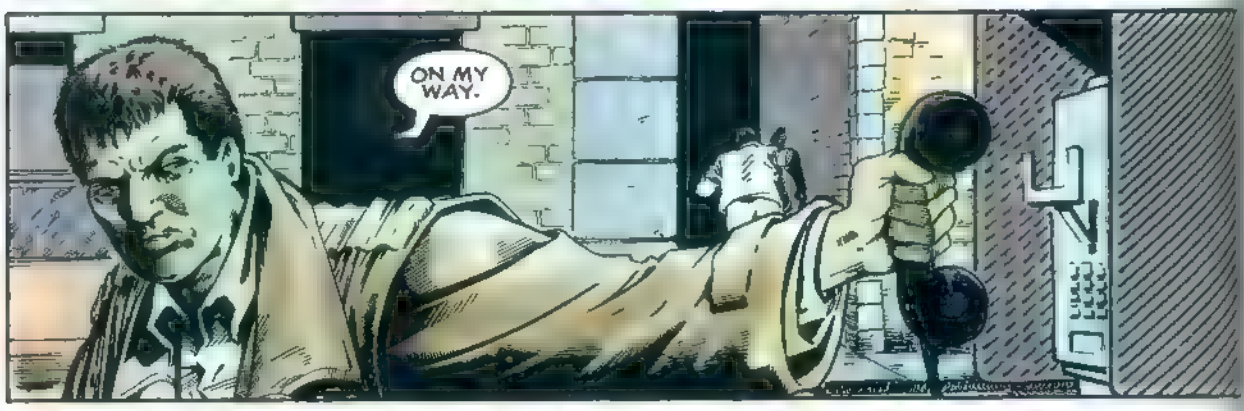
CRYSTAL PALACE
"I'D RATHER BE IN THE COUNTRY, BUT DUTY CALLS. I SUPPOSE THAT WAS JETBOY'S EXCUSE TOO.

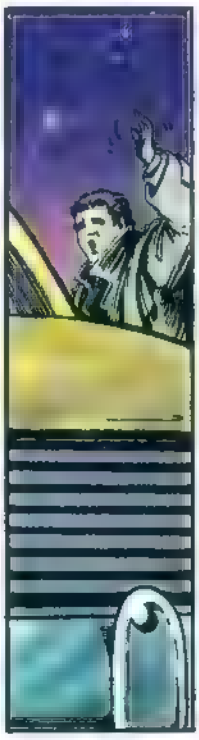

"BUT THEN, JETBOY WAS A HERO AND I'M JUST A VIGILANTE KILLER.

"C'EST LA GUERRE."
TELEPHONE

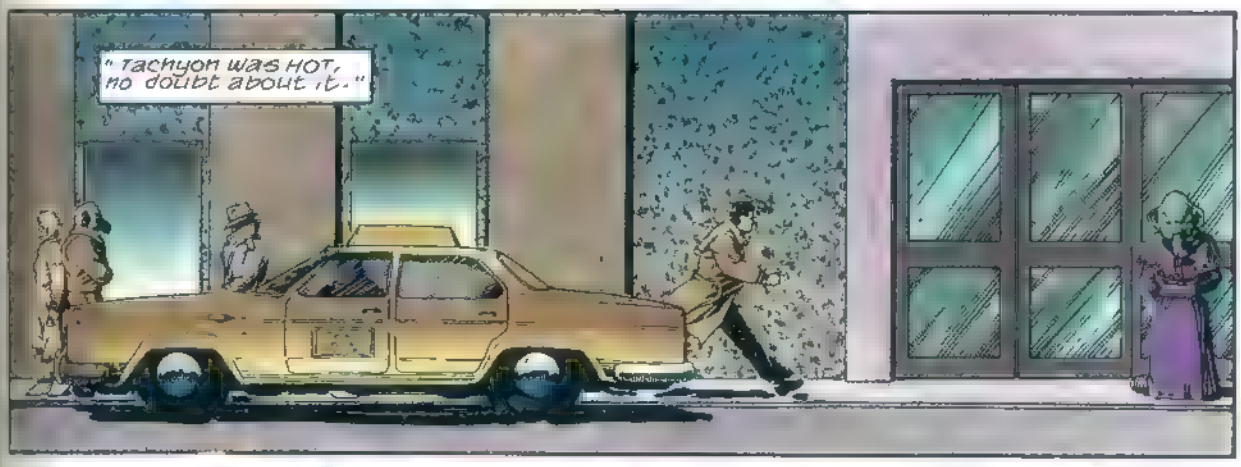
DOC? ACKROYD HERE, JUST CHECKING IN. TALKED TO THAT EDDY SHILOH GUY. HE'S DEFINITELY WEIRD...


WHAT?

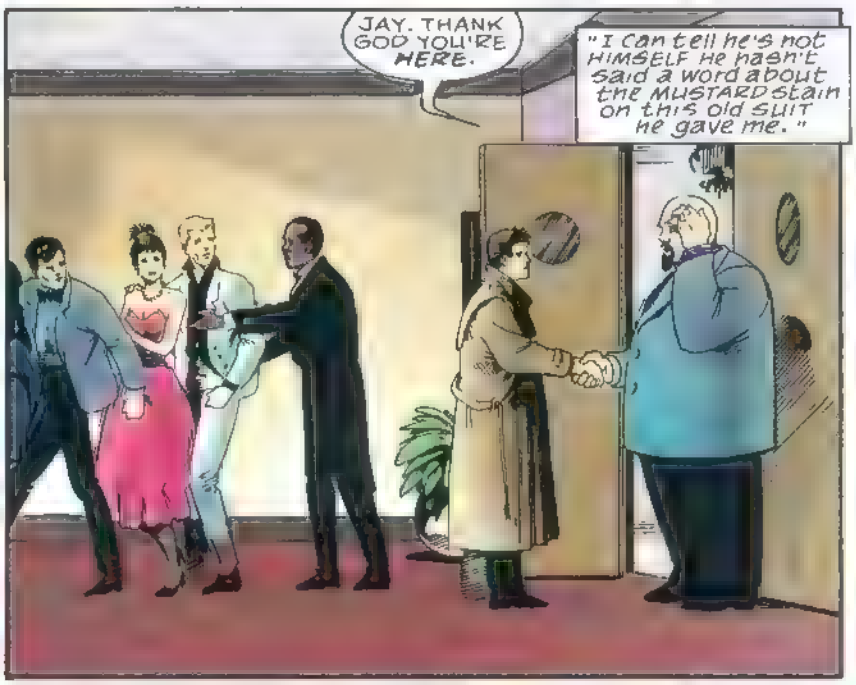

ON MY WAY.



GOD DAMN IT!


"Tachyon was HOT, no doubt about it."

"Got a tip from the SLEEPER about a bomb at ACES HIGH."


JAY. THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE.
"I can tell he's not HIMSELF He hasn't said a word about the MUSTARD stain on this old SUIT he gave me."

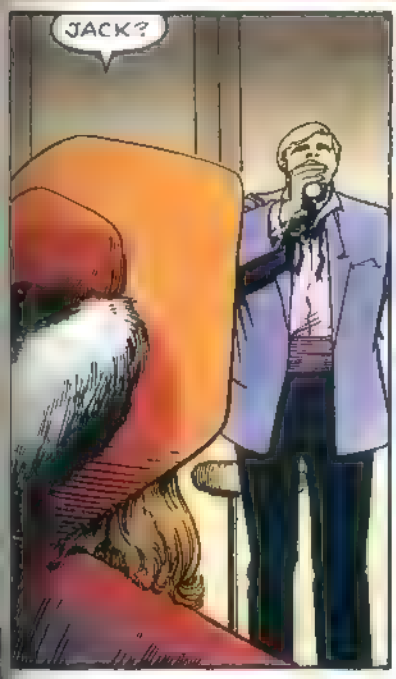
CROYD AND TACHYON ARE ON THEIR WAY.
DID CROYD SAY WHERE THIS BOMB IS SUPPOSED TO BE?

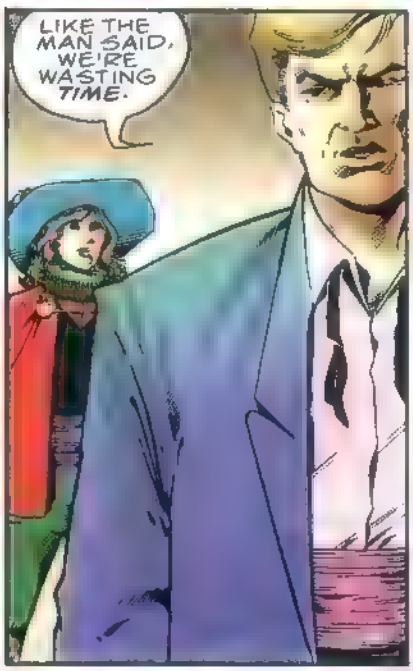
IT COULD BE ANYWHERE. IT COULD GO OFF ANY SECOND.

SWELL.

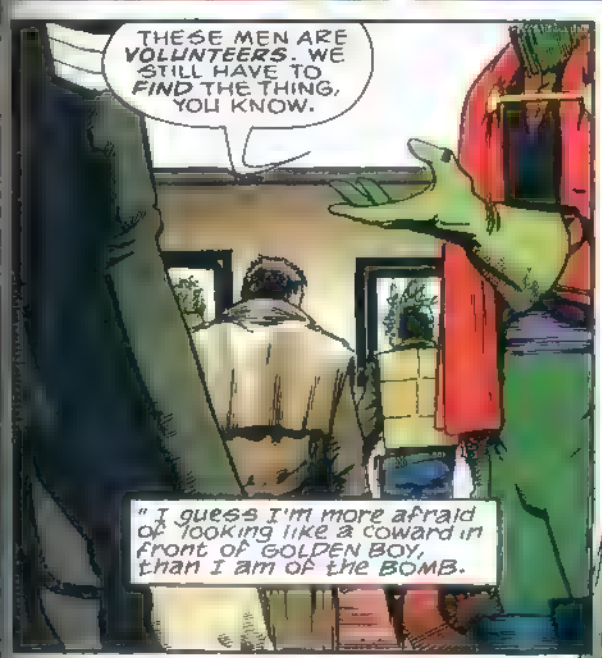
JACK?
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CALL YOU.
I'VE BEEN AROUND.
SO YOU FOUND ME. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE BOMBS?
NOT MY STYLE.
I SELL PEOPLE OUT, REMEMBER? NOT BLOW THEM UP.

WHAT'S EVERYBODY STANDING AROUND


JACK?


LIKE THE MAN SAID, WE'RE WASTING TIME.

WE NEED TO CLEAR THESE CIVILIANS OUT OF HERE.
"Great IDEA."

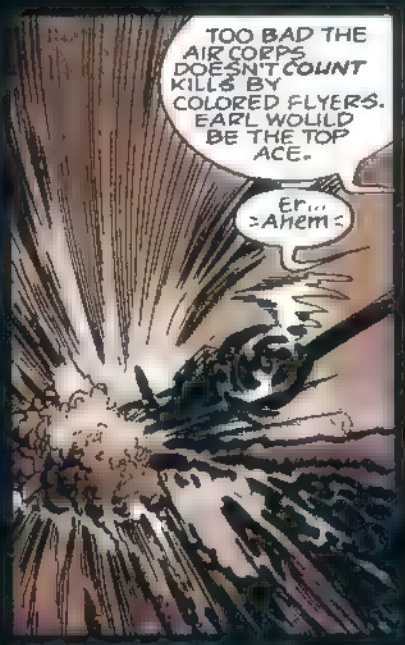

THESE MEN ARE VOLUNTEERS. WE STILL HAVE TO FIND THE THING, YOU KNOW.
"I guess I'm more afraid of looking like a coward in front of GOLDEN BOY, than I am of the BOMB.

"As for JACK none of us will ever know what keeps HIM going."

"THEY KNOW HOW TO MAKE ME FEEL WELCOME, ALL RIGHT. STORY OF MY LIFE.
"I WAS BORN INTO HARD TIMES, IN 1924. FARMS WERE BEING FORECLOSED PRODUCE WAS TOO CHEAP TO BE WORTH SELLING.
"I'D BRING FOOD AND HOT DRINKS TO THE HOLIDAY ASSOCIATION MEN PATROLLING THE ROADS."
THANKS, KID.
"THEY'D STOP ANYBODY SNEAKING GOODS TO MARKET. BY FORCE. ANY GRAIN WAS DUMPED...
"AND THE ANIMALS WERE SHOT."*
BDOW
BDOW
*SEE STUDS TERKEL'S HARD TIMES -- W.J.W.
BDOW BDOW BDOW BDOW BDOW BDOW

RRRROOOOOWWWRRRR
HEY, JACK. THAT MEDIC LEAVE ANY MORPHINE?
AIR CORPS IS UP EARLY. AIN'T THAT RIGHT, MARTY?
FINALLY GOT MY MILLION-DOLLAR WOUND. HURTS LIKE A BITCH.
I BET THE FIELD LOOKS PRETTY FROM THE AIR. YOU THINK SO, MARTY?
JUST A PRETTY ITALIAN FIELD.
YOU GET TO NEW YORK, YOU LOOK ME UP. MY DAD CAN GET YOU IN THE THEATER. HE'S A PRODUCER...
I HATE THOSE SMART SS AIR COKPS SONS OF BITCHES.
IF I EVER GET ONE OF THOSE FLYBOYS ON THE GROUND.
I'M GOING TO GET HIM GOOD.
I SURE WISH I COULD FLY...

EARL'S GOT HIM NOW! LOOKIT THIS!
GOOD SHOOTING, SANDERSON, HOW MANY DOES THAT MAKE?
THIRTY, SIR. THANK YOU, SIR.


TOO BAD THE AIR CORPS DOESN'T COUNT KILLS BY COLORED FLYERS. EARL WOULD BE THE TOP ACE.
Er... =Ahem=

SORRY, SIR, BUT YOU KNOW IT AIN'T FAIR. THE THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY SECOND HAS THE BEST RECORD IN THE AIR FORCE.*
LET'S HOLD IT DOWN SOLDIER. POLICY IS SET IN WASHINGTON NOT NAPLES.
*SEE ROBERT C. ROSE'S THE LONELY EAGLES --W.J.W.

Underneath the Lantern, By the Barracks Gate

TEAR A PIECE OFF FOR ME, FELLA...
Darling, I Remember the Way you used to Wait

'Twas There That You Whispered Tenderly, That You Loved Me, That You'd Always Be...

My Lili of the Lamplights, My Own Lili Marlene...

"I SURVIVED THE WAR, AND SURVIVED THE DAY OF THE WILD CARD. I GOT MY ACE...

"I GLOWED A BRIGHT GOLD WHEN I USED MY POWER."

CONGRATULATIONS, JACK. YOU'RE THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

"WHICH WAS WHEN THE GOVERNMENT SHOWED UP, IN THE PERSON OF ONE ARCHIBALD HOLMES.

"HE CAME UP WITH THE FOUR ACES.

"DAVID HARSTEIN -- THE ENVOY -- WAS A CHESS HUSTLER FROM BROOKLYN. THE WILD CARD MADE HIM LIKABLE. VERY LIKABLE. PEOPLE DID ANYTHING HE ASKED.

"AS LONG AS THEY WERE IN THE SAME ROOM.

"BLYTHE VAN RENSSELAER -- BRAIN TRUST -- WAS A BOSTON PATRICIAN MARRIED TO A SCUMBAG CONGRESSMAN. SHE COULD ABSORB WHOLE PERSONALITIES, MEMORIES AND ALL.

"MR. HOLMES WANTED HER TO PRESERVE THE MINDS OF PEOPLE LIKE EINSTEIN, OPPENHEIMER, SALK.

"MR. HOLMES PAID US A SALARY TO FIGHT FASCISM, TO WORK FOR EDUCATION AND LIBERTY.

"HE CONSULTED WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT, BUT HE MADE HIS OWN DECISIONS. THEY CALLED HIM 'DEMOCRACY'S ACE IN THE HOLE.'

"EARL COULD FLY, AND HE COULD PROJECT AN IRRESISTIBLE WALL OF FORCE IN FRONT OF HIM.

"HE WAS A LABOR LAWYER AND HE WORKED FOR CIVIL RIGHTS. HE'D BEEN A COMMUNIST IN THE THIRTIES, BUT SO HAD A LOT OF PEOPLE.

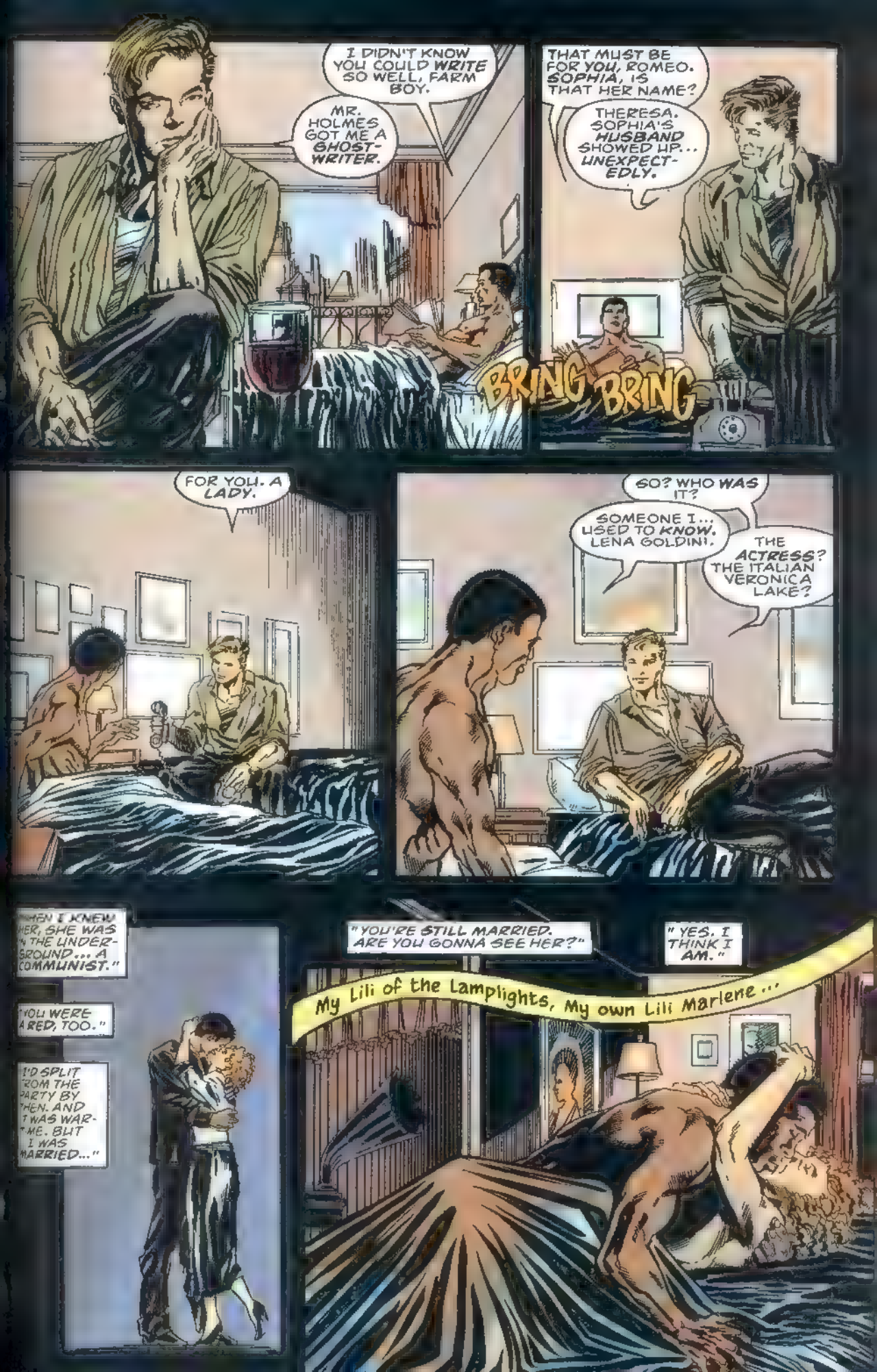
"THEY CALLED HIM BLACK EAGLE.

"ME? I WAS THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD. MR. HOLMES POINTED OUT THE HEADS HE WANTED BROKE, AND I BROKE 'EM.

"THEY CALLED ME GOLDEN BOY.

"NATCH.

"THE FIRST PLACE MR. HOLMES SENT US WAS ARGENTINA, TO GET RID OF PERON AND HIS BLONDE HOOKER.
"DAVID GOT TO THE OFFICERS, EARL WENT AFTER THE PLANES. ME, I JUST BUSTED HEADS.
"THAT CLOSED SOUTH AMERICA TO THE FASCISTS. WE CAPTURED MENGELE AND BORMANN...
"AND WE GOT SO CLOSE TO EICHMANN THAT HE PANICKED AND RAN INTO THE GUNS OF A RUSSIAN PATROL.
"DAVID TALKED FRANCO INTO STEPPING DOWN AND STAYED WITH HIM ALL THE WAY TO SWITZERLAND.
"BLYTHE ATTENDED A LOT OF SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES.
"EARL HAD NOBLER IN-TENTIONS. HE WAS MODELING HIMSELF INTO A HERO. FAITHFUL HUSBAND TO LILIAN, IDOL OF MILLIONS HE WAS ALSO MY BEST FRIEND.
"SHE LEFT HER HORRIBLE HUSBAND FOR TACHYON.
"SHE EVEN ABSORBED HIS MIND.
"I FOUND CELEBRITY TO MY TASTE I PURSUED EVERY-THING IN SKIRTS


I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD WRITE SO WELL, FARM BOY.
MR. HOLMES GOT ME A GHOST-WRITER.
THAT MUST BE FOR YOU, ROMEO. SOPHIA, IS THAT HER NAME?
THERESA. SOPHIA'S HUSBAND SHOWED UP... UNEXPECT-EDLY.
BRING BRING
FOR YOU. A LADY.
SO? WHO WAS IT?
SOMEONE I... USED TO KNOW. LENA GOLDINI.
THE ACTRESS? THE ITALIAN VERONICA LAKE?
HEN I KNEW HER, SHE WAS N THE UNDER-GROUND... A COMMUNIST."
YOU WERE A RED, TOO."
I'D SPLIT ROM THE PARTY BY HEN. AND T WAS WAR-TIME. BUT I WAS MARRIED..."
"YOU'RE STILL MARRIED. ARE YOU GONNA SEE HER?"
"YES. I THINK I AM."
My Lili of the Lamplights, My own Lili Marlene...

EARL, YOU'RE NO GOOD AT THIS. WHAT IF LILIAN FINDS OUT?
I'M MEETING WITH GANDHI IN INDIA TOMORROW. THAT'LL BE THE END OF IT.
"I DON'T THINK HE SAW LENA AGAIN. ME, I HAD OTHER THINGS ON MY MIND -- LIKE THE OFFER I'D HAD FROM L.B. MAYER
"NEXT THING I KNEW I WAS PULLING DOWN FIVE GRAND A WEEK IN THE EDDIE RICKENBACKER STORY."
HOW THEY TREATING YOU, FARM BOY?
THEY'RE TEACHING ME TO FLY, EARL! MGM'S GONNA MAKE ME AN ACE!
YOU'RE ALREADY AN ACE, JACK!
"I WENT FROM THE THREE-MARTINI LUNCH INTO THE WRAP PARTY WITHOUT SOBERING UP...
"THREE DAYS LATE I WAS IN TIJUANA TRYING TO READ THE NAME NEXT TO MINE ON A MARRIA LICENSE.
"THE NAME TURNED OUT TO BE KIM WOLFE. SHE WAS A STARLET FROM GEORGIA, AND I WAS FAITHFUL TO HER.
"AFTER MY FASHION.
"I NEVER SLEPT WITH THE SAME GIRL TWICE...
"UNLESS KIM WAS OUT OF TOWN ON LOCATION."

"WHEN THE FEAR CAME, KIM AND I WERE ON VACATION IN PALM SPRINGS."

WHAT'S THIS?

A CONGRESSIONAL SUBPOENA. YOU'RE TO APPEAR IN WASHINGTON AT NINE AM TUESDAY.

YOU SURE YOU GOT THE RIGHT MAN?

I'M SURE.

JACK, LISTEN TO ME...

THE REST OF US GOT OURS THIS MORNING. WE'VE BEEN CALLING YOU IN L.A.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

THEY'RE TRYING TO BREAK THE ACES, FARM BOY.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES? WHO ARE THESE GUYS?

THEY'RE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMITTEES IN CONGRESS. HAVEN'T YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION TO ANYTHING?

YOU KNOW, YOU LOOK BETTER IN SWEAT THAN ANYONE I'VE EVER SEEN.

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD OF THE HOLLYWOOD TEN? HUAC WENT AFTER THEM -- AND NOW THEY RE IN JAIL! *

THEY WERE COMMUNISTS, WEREN'T THEY?

THE FOUR ACES AREN'T REDS. WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

* SEE DAVID CAUTE'S THE GREAT FEAR -- W.J.W.

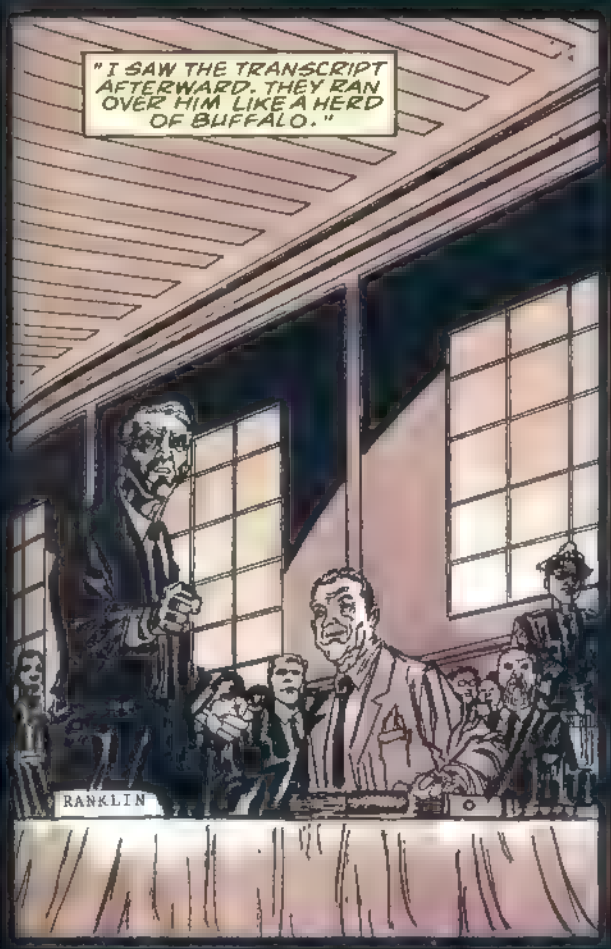
"THE STUDIO LAWYER -- AND KIM -- WANTED ME TO LOOK OUT FOR THE STUDIO'S INTERESTS."

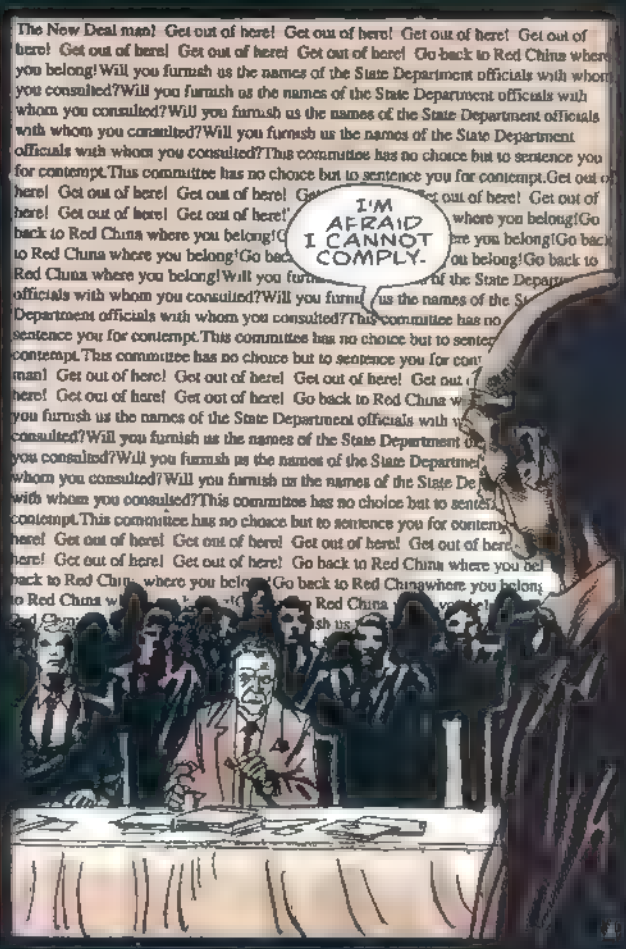
I'D ADVISE YOU TO COOPERATE. THE TEN STOOD ON THEIR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS OF FREE SPEECH AND ASSOCIATION...

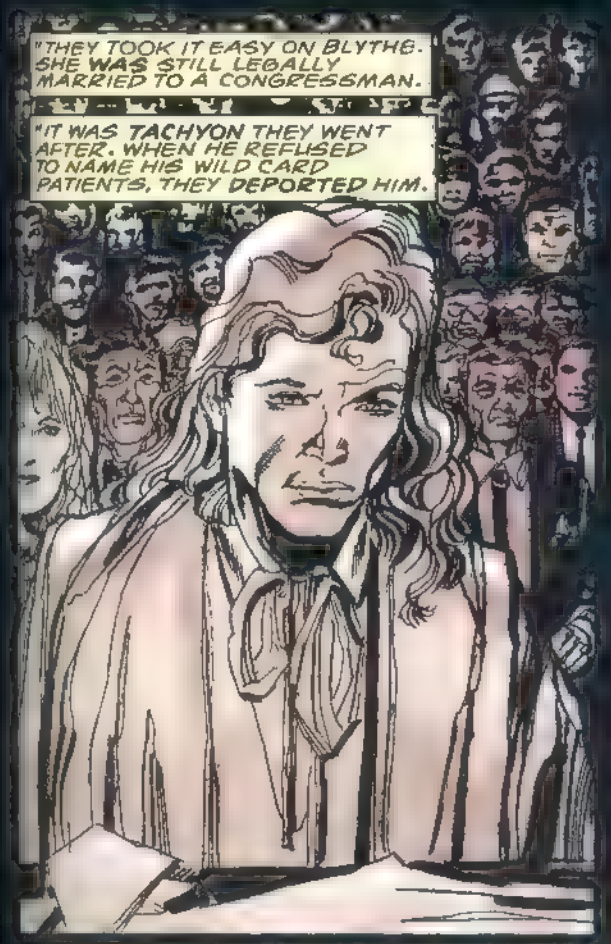
... AND THE COMMITTEE BLITZED THEM.

I'M GONNA TALK TO EARL AND MR. HOLMES.

THE TEN ARE IN JAIL. SO IS ALGER HISS. THE ROSENBERGS ARE GETTING THE CHAIR. IF YOU RE ON A BLACKLIST YOU CAN'T WORK...
THIS IS AMERICA! WE'VE JUST WON A WAR! HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING?
IF THEY CAN BREAK THE ACES, THEY PROVE THEY CAN BREAK ANYBODY.
YOU'RE ALL FOOLS!
SLAM
HUAC HAS NO MANDATE...
BLACKLIST IS ILLEGAL...
EVIDENCE IS ALL HEAR-SAY...
INADMISS ABLE...
NONE OF THAT MATTERS. IT'S HAPPENING ANYWAY.
LET US NOT GIVE IN TO DESPAIR, GENTLEMEN. FREE ASSOCIATION IS PROTECTED BY THE CONSTITUTION. EVERYONE CAN AGREE ON THAT.
"I WATCHED MR. HOLMES WALK INTO THE HEARING AND TRIED TO BELIEVE HE WAS RIGHT...
"AFTER HE WALKED OUT, HE HAD TO BE PUT TO BED WITH A SEDATIVE.
"HE WAS GOING TO PRISON."


"I SAW THE TRANSCRIPT AFTERWARD. THEY RAN OVER HIM LIKE A HERD OF BUFFALO."
RANKLIN


I'M AFRAID I CANNOT COMPLY.


"THEY TOOK IT EASY ON BLYTHE. SHE WAS STILL LEGALLY MARRIED TO A CONGRESSMAN.
"IT WAS TACHYON THEY WENT AFTER. WHEN HE REFUSED TO NAME HIS WILD CARD PATIENTS, THEY DEPORTED HIM.

"THEY PUT DAVID IN A GLASS BOOTH SO HIS PHEROMONES WOULDN'T AFFECT THE COMMITTEE. CHAIRMAN WOOD KEPT DAVID'S MICROPHONE TURNED OFF FOR MOST OF THE HEARING."

YOU HAVE TO TESTIFY! YOU CAN'T SAVE EARL. HE REALLY WAS A RED.
I CAN GO DOWN WITH HIM.
TAP TAP
IT'S THAT... THAT COLORED MAN. I'M LEAVING.
SLAM
KIM MAD ABOUT SOMETHING?
WELL, YOU KNOW.
LOUIS B. WANTS ME TO DO THE BRAVE THING.
BRAVE. CAN YOU BEAT THAT?
I FIGURE THE WITCH HUNT'LL LAST TEN YEARS OR SO. THEN WE'LL BE HEROES AGAIN.
TEN... YEARS?
REMEMBER, FARM BOY. WE'RE ACES! THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM US.
"THE FEAR NEVER TOUCHED HIM. HE HAD NO REGRETS. HE WAS HAPPY."
DAMN IT, EARL! I CAN'T FLY DAMN IT!

MR. CHAIRMAN, MY CLIENT IS PREPARED TO TESTIFY AS A FRIENDLY WITNESS...
UH... I DO NOT KNOW THEIR NAMES.
UMM... NOT -- NO -- NOT IN HERSELF, NO.
"WHY DID I SAY THAT?"
MRS. VAN RENSSELAER HAS ...SHE HAS ABSORBED THE MIND OF DR. TACHYON. SHE WOULD KNOW ANY NAMES THAT HE WOULD KNOW.
"I SHOULD HAVE JUST TAKEN A GUN AND SHOT HER."
THERE WAS... SOME GIRL IN ITALY.
LENA... LENA... GOLDONI.
L-E-N-

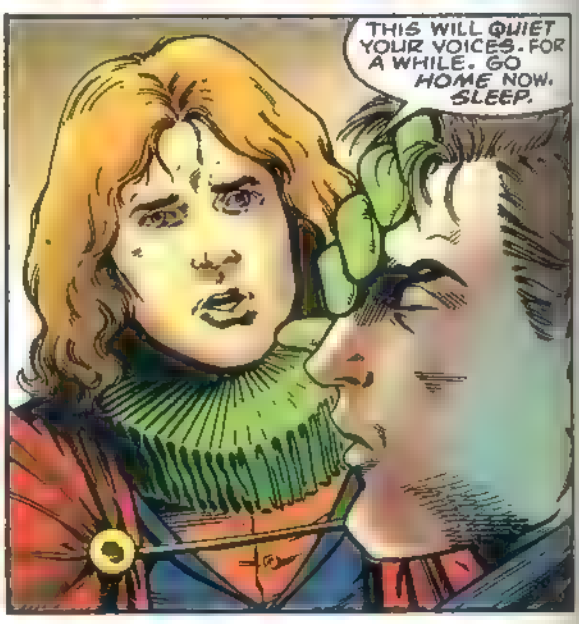
I'M AFRAID I CANNOT COMPLY.
"HE FLEW AWAY TO EUROPE AND RENOUNCED HIS CITIZENSHIP. CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS SAID HE'D SET THE MOVEMENT BACK TWENTY YEARS.
"HE DIED OF A CEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE IN 1979. IN THE FEW INTERVIEWS HE GAVE, HE NEVER MENTIONED ME.
"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GRATEFUL FOR THAT.
"MR. HOLMES WAS ALLOWED OUT OF PRISON ON ACCOUNT OF HIS HEALTH. HE DIED OF CANCER A FEW MONTHS LATER
233235
"DAVID SERVED HIS TIME, THEN GOT DRAFTED UNDER THE SPECIAL CONSCRIPTION ACT. HE NEVER REPORTED. NO ONE'S SEEN HIM SINCE.
YOU MUST NOT TELL. THESE POOR UNFORTUNATES ARE MY PEOPLE. I HAVE GIVEN THEM MY WORD.
I'M NOT BRAVE. YOU KNOW I'M NOT.
"I FOUND OUT ABOUT BLYTHE FROM THE NEWSREELS. THE COMMITTEE CALLED HER BACK TO DIG NAMES OUT OF HER TACHYON PERSONA.
135670

I SEE... I SEE I HAVE NO CHOICE.
NO! DEFY THEM!
"I KNEW WHAT DR. TACHYON HAD DONE. HE HAD SEIZED HER MIND TO KEEP HER FROM TALKING. BUT SHE WASN'T AS STRONG AS HE THOUGHT. HER MIND JUST--SHATTERED.
"ALL THE PEOPLE IN HER HEAD WERE TALKING AT ONCE. TACHYON MIGHT HAVE HEALED HER, BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET HIM IN.
"SHE DIED IN-SANE...
"I WENT TO KOREA. HELD THE PUSAN PERIMETER. SAVED A LOT OF LIVES.
"IT ALMOST MADE ME FEEL PROUD.
"KIM CAUGHT ME IN BED WITH HER DERMATOLOGIST. THERE WERE TWO MORE MARRIAGES AFTER THAT.
"MY MOVIE CAREER TOOK TEN YEARS TO DIE. I COULDN'T SEEM TO PULL OFF THE HERO PARTS ANY MORE.
"AFTER METRO LET ME GO, I WENT TO WARNER, THEN TV. BY THIS TIME, PEOPLE NOTICED I WASN'T AGING.
REAL ESTATE. AND I STILL FEEL LIKE A RAT. THEY CALL ME THE JUDAS ACE. I'M NO OLDER THAN I WAS IN 1946. MAYBE I'LL BE THE JUDAS ACE FOR-EVER.
"MAYBE I DESERVE IT.'

"I almost feel SORRY for the guy. One screwup in the Fifties, and he's the JUDAS ACE forever."

THERE YOU ARE. YOU GOT TO HELP ME, DOC. I'M GOING NUTS FROM ALL THIS STUFF IN MY HEAD.
HEY! I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN CHARGE HERE!

WHAT ARE YOU SEEING? IS IT GOLDEN BOY? DID HE PLANT THE BOMB?
IT'S ALL JUMBLED UP. IT'S GETTING WORSE AND WORSE. LOUDER. WHY DON'T YOU GO INTO GOLDEN BOY'S HEAD YOURSELF?


THIS WILL QUIET YOUR VOICES. FOR A WHILE. GO HOME NOW. SLEEP.

I WON'T TOUCH JACK'S MIND. IT GOES AGAINST EVERYTHING I BELIEVE. BUT I STILL CAN'T TRUST HIM.
JAY!

WATCH HIM, WILL YOU? AND IF YOU SEE ANYTHING FISHY -- ANYTHING AT ALL -- POP HIM OUT OF HERE.
"Swell. TACKY won't use his power, but he's plenty willing to shanghai MINE!"

WHAT'S GOING ON?
I HEARD SOMETHING.
ISN'T THERE A LADDER IN HERE?
EVIDENTLY NOT.
MY GOD...
HOLY SHIT...
"... it's the BOMB.
00:17
CAN YOU DISCONNECT IT?
00:15
THERE'S NO TIME!

00:13
LET ME AT IT, I CAN--
00:12
I'LL HANDLE IT!
00:11
00:08
00:07
I CAN TELEPORT IT.
00:06
00:04
CINZINO
00:03
00:02
00:01
00:00

KABOOM
EVERYBODY OKAY?
WELL ENOUGH IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. BUT WHERE'S --

THAT'S IT?

KRTCH

NOT EVEN A "THANKS, JACK" AFTER I RISKED MY LIFE?

YOU RISKED EVERYBODY. JAY COULD HAVE TELEPORTED THE BOMB AWAY--

TCHAK

TO HELL WITH JAY! TO HELL WITH ALL OF YOU!

I HOPE THE NEXT BOMB BLOWS YOU ALL TO HELL!

TO BE CONTINUED...

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SPECIAL THANKS TO GREGORY WRIGHT, DAN CHICHESTER, AND ARCHIE GOODWIN

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IT'S ANOTHER WORLD. THE HEROES ARE REAL. SO ARE THE MONSTERS...

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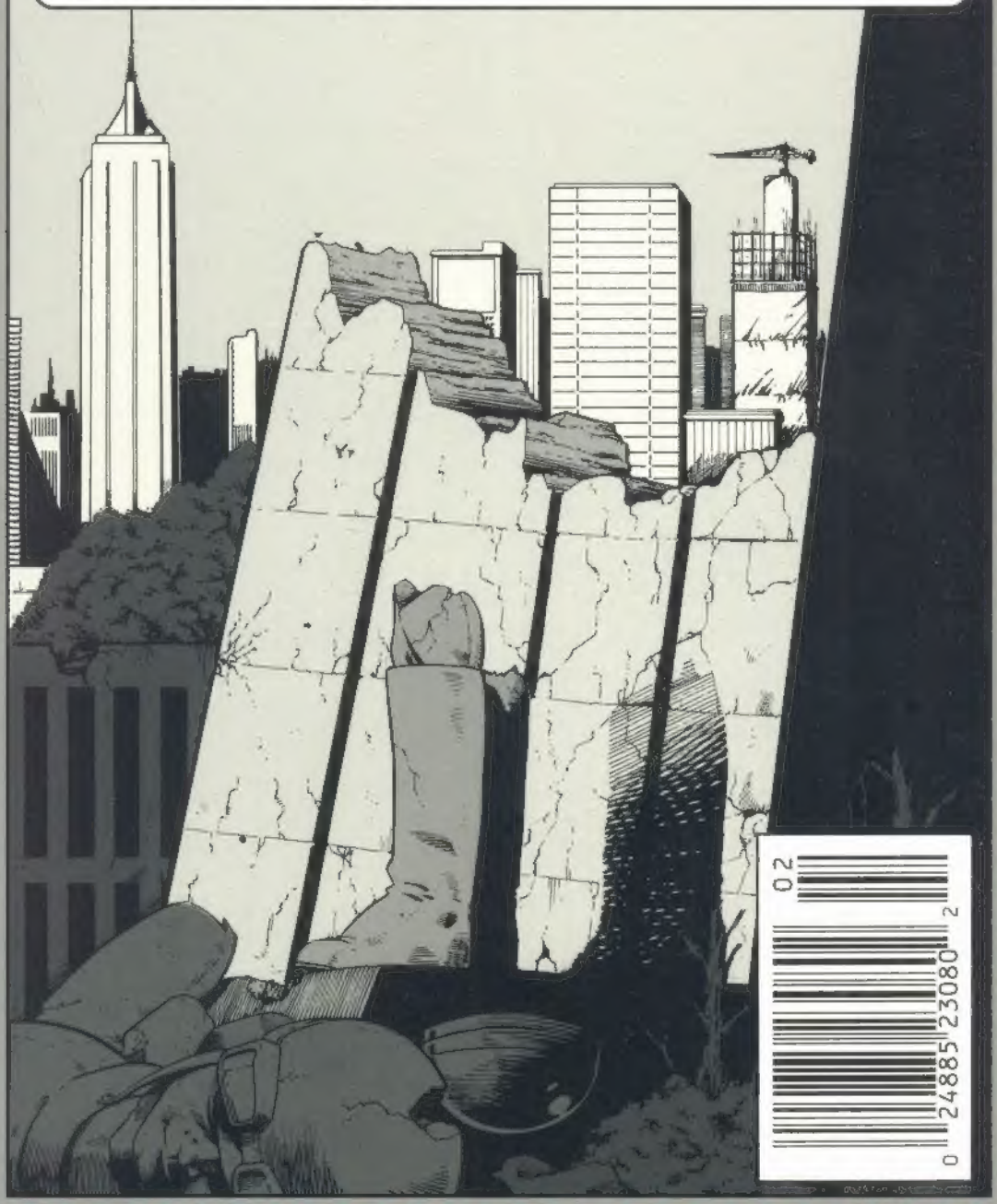
Jay Ackroyd, private investigator, is hired to solve the bombing of Jetboy's Tomb. He finds himself on a quest through the history of the Wild Card Universe, seeking the nature of heroism. His path will cross that of the shape-shifting Sleeper, of Yeoman, the vigilante archer, and Golden Boy, the world's most famous traitor. And the trail dead-ends at a ticking bomb...